

FASAB Facts 2007

Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board • 441 G Street, NW, Mailstop 6K17V, Washington, DC 20548
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In October 1990, three officials responsible for federal financial reporting established the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB or "the Board") as a federal advisory committee. The officials were the Secretary of the Treasury, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the Comptroller General of the United States. They created FASAB to develop accounting standards and principles for the United States Government.

They are referred to as the Board's sponsors because they possess legal authority under various laws to establish accounting and financial reporting standards for the Government. The three agencies they head fund the FASAB along with the Congressional Budget Office. In October 1999 the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) recognized FASAB as the board that promulgates generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) for federal entities.

To meet its unique mission, FASAB considers the information needs of the public, Congress, managers, and other users of federal financial information. The Board considers comments from the public on its proposed Statements, which are widely distributed as "exposure drafts." The Board publishes Statements of Federal Financial Accounting Concepts (SFFAC) and Statements of Federal Financial Accounting Standards (SFFAS). FASAB also publishes Interpretations, Technical Bulletins, and staff guidance.

After the Board concludes its deliberations on a proposed Statement and submits it to the sponsors, they have 90 days to review the Statement. If neither the Director of the Office of Management and Budget nor the Comptroller General object, the Statement is published by FASAB and becomes generally accepted accounting principles for federal financial reporting entities.

Background

Article I, Section 9 of the Constitution of the United States provides that "No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time." Various laws have subsequently provided additional accounting and reporting requirements suitable for the needs of each era, and have vested various public officials with responsibilities for financial management.

The Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990--as amended by the Government Management Reform Act of 1994--for the first time required annual, audited financial statements for the United States Government and its component entities, referred to as federal reporting entities. The Act also established the position of Chief Financial Officer in each department to ensure the development of integrated agency accounting and financial management systems, including financial reporting and internal controls, which comply with applicable accounting principles, standards, and requirements, and internal control standards.

In conjunction with passage of the CFO Act of 1990, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Comptroller General established FASAB to develop the "applicable accounting principles" for the newly required financial statements. The Board's Steering Committee, comprised of the Chairperson and the Board members from Treasury, OMB, and GAO, is responsible for administrative matters. Both Board and Steering Committee meetings are open to the public, with notice of meeting times and locations being published in the Federal Register and on the World Wide Web at www.fasab.gov.

During 1999 a task force of the AICPA reviewed the Board's policies and procedures to assess their conformance with AICPA's criteria for designating bodies that promulgate GAAP. The Sponsors made certain changes in procedures necessary to conform to the Institute's criteria. In October 1999 AICPA's Council designated FASAB as the body that promulgates GAAP for federal entities in the United States.

The Mission of the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board

The mission of the FASAB is to develop accounting standards after considering the financial and budgetary information needs of congressional oversight groups, executive agencies, and the needs of other users of Federal financial information.

Accounting and financial reporting standards are essential for public accountability and for an efficient and effective functioning of our democratic system of government. Thus Federal accounting standards and financial reporting play a major role in fulfilling the government's duty to be publicly accountable and can be used to (1) assess the government's accountability and its efficiency and effectiveness, and (2) contribute to the understanding of the economic, political, and social consequences of the allocation and various uses of Federal resources.

Accounting standards should:

- Result in the Federal Government and its agencies providing users of financial reports with understandable, relevant, and reliable information about the financial position, activities, and results of operations of the United States Government and its component units; and
- Foster the improvement of accounting systems and effective internal controls that will help provide reasonable assurance that governmental activities can be conducted economically, efficiently, and effectively, and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

How the Mission of the Board is Accomplished

To accomplish its mission, the FASAB acts to:

- Determine the primary users of Federal financial information and their needs;
- Develop accounting standards and principles that improve the usefulness of financial reports based on the needs of users and on the primary characteristics of understandability, relevance, and reliability;
- Provide advice to central financial agencies on implementing the standards;
- Improve the common understanding of information contained in financial reports;
- Develop standards and principles that take into account expected benefits and perceived costs;
- Review the effects of current standards and develop amendments or new standards when appropriate;
- Use a thoughtful, open, neutral, and fair deliberative process and consider the accountability and decision-making needs of users;
- Develop rules of procedures designed to permit timely, thorough, and open study of financial accounting and reporting issues and to encourage broad public participation in all phases of the accounting standard-setting process; and
- Be objective and neutral and ensure, as much as possible, that the information resulting from its proposed standards is a faithful representation of the effects of Federal Government activities. Objective and neutral mean free from bias, precluding the FASAB from placing any particular interest above the interests of the many who rely on the information contained in financial reports.
- The Board recognizes that general acceptance of its standards is enhanced by demonstrating that the comments received in due process are considered carefully.

Composition and Selection of the Board

The Board has ten members. Four members are from the FASAB's Sponsors and the Congressional Budget Office. These members are selected by the head of each agency and do not have fixed terms.

The Board includes six public or non-federal members. The Principals select the six public members after having considered recommendations of a panel convened by FASAB's chairperson. The panel consists of not more than seven members, and includes representatives of the

Financial Accounting Foundation, the Accounting Research Foundation, and the AICPA, as well as the FASAB members who represent the sponsoring agencies. The Principals select the Board's chairperson from among the non-federal members.

The non-federal members are eligible for two five-year terms. Terms are staggered to provide continuity on the Board.

Due Process

The board is subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act and follows rules of procedure that at a minimum meet the requirements of the Act. The board follows an open process for considering accounting standards which includes the following steps:

1. Identification of accounting issues and agenda decisions,
2. Preliminary deliberations,
3. Preparation of initial documents (issues papers and/or discussion memorandums),
4. Release of documents (e.g., exposure drafts) to the public, public hearings when necessary, and consideration of comments,
5. Further deliberations and consideration of comments, and
6. Approval by at least a majority vote.

7. Submission of proposed Statement to the Principals for ninety day review (forty five days for Interpretations)
8. Publication of final Statement or Interpretation

The Board's rules of procedure to implement these steps are available from FASAB and on the World Wide Web.

As an adjunct to the deliberative process, the Board appoints task forces, as necessary, to advise it on a variety of accounting matters. Task forces play an important role in the accounting standard-setting process as they provide expert views and recommend solutions to issues or problems.

Board Members

Tom L. Allen - Mr. Allen is currently a member of the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board and will become its chairman on January 1, 2007. He also is serving on the accounting department faculty at Weber State University. He retired June 30, 2004 as Chairman of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) after serving in that capacity for nine years. Prior to becoming the GASB Chairman on July 1, 1995, he served one year as a part-time member of the Board. Mr. Allen was elected as Utah State Auditor in 1984 and served as the State Auditor of Utah until he resigned to chair the GASB. He is a certified public accountant and a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants where he served from 1987 to 1990 as Chairman of the AICPA Members in Government Committee. He also served on the American Institute of Certified Public Accountant's Ethics Executive Committee, Government Accounting and Auditing Committee, and Auditing Standards Board.

Claire Gorham Cohen – Ms. Cohen is a vice chairman at Fitch, Inc., a credit rating agency where she oversees state and state agency ratings. Ms. Cohen came to Fitch from Moody's Investor Service where she was vice president and managing director for state ratings as well as a chairman of the public finance department rating committee. Her career has spanned virtually all aspects of the municipal market as well as covering international sovereign issuers. Ms. Cohen started her career at Dun & Bradstreet after receiving an AB in government from Radcliffe College. She has served as chairman of the Municipal Analysts Group of New York and on the Board of Governors of the National Federation of Municipal Analysts. Ms. Cohen is a member of the Governmental Accounting Standards Advisory Counsel.

Robert Dacey – Mr. Dacey is currently Chief Accountant for the Government Accountability Office (GAO). Mr. Dacey has provided leadership for significant GAO efforts in financial accounting and auditing, as well as in information security, homeland security, and other information technology areas. He served as Director of the consolidated financial statement audit for the initial three audits of the U.S. government's financial statements. Mr. Dacey served as a member of the AICPA's Auditing Standards Board (ASB) and the federal government's Accounting and Auditing Policy Committee. Prior to joining GAO, Mr. Dacey was a senior manager with Deloitte & Touche and served as divisional business manager and controller for an international corporation. Mr. Dacey is a Certified Public Accountant, Certified Government Financial Manager, and Certified Information Systems Auditor. He received a B.B.A., magna cum laude, from the University of Cincinnati and a J.D. from the George Mason University School of Law.

John A. Farrell – Mr. Farrell is a retired partner from KPMG LLP. He served as a partner in the Government Assurance practice and directed audits and audit-based advisory service engagements with federal, state, and local government clients. For the last five years of his 29 year career with KPMG, he almost exclusively managed audits in the federal government arena. He has substantial knowledge of the operations of law and regulation concerning appropriated funds in a wide variety of government organizations. Prior to being appointed to the Board, he participated in the development of accounting and auditing standards for federal entities. In addition, he has consulted with federal entities on the appropriate application of accounting standards. Mr. Farrell received a B.S. from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in 1970. He is Certified Public Accountant and Certified Government Financial Manager. He has been a FASAB member since June 2001.

Norwood J. Jackson, Jr. - Mr. Jackson has over thirty five years of experience in providing public and government accounting, auditing, and advisory services. He is currently managing vice president at AOC Solutions, Inc., a small management consulting firm in Northern Virginia. His previous experience includes serving as Deputy Controller of the Office of Federal Financial Management at the Office of Management and Budget as well as being a partner with KPMG LLP. Prior to his federal service, he was the Deputy Auditor of Public Accounts for the Commonwealth of Virginia. He also has been active in standard setting. He served an eight-year term on the United States Comptroller General's Advisory Council on Government Auditing Standards, a four-year term on the Auditing Standards Board of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, and a five year

term on the FASAB as the representative from the Office of Management and Budget. He joined the Board in January 2007.

Donald B. Marron - Dr. Marron is Deputy Director of the Congressional Budget Office. He previously served as Chief Economist for the President's Council of Economic Advisers and as the Executive Director and Chief Economist of the Congress's Joint Economic Committee. Before his government service, Dr. Marron served as chief financial officer of a medical software start-up, as a principal with the economic-consulting firm Charles River Associates, and as an assistant professor of economics at the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business. Dr. Marron has a long-standing and broad interest in the economics of public policy. He received his undergraduate degree from Harvard University and his doctorate from MIT.

James M. Patton – Mr. Patton is a Professor of Business Administration at the Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business of the University of Pittsburgh. His professional experience includes Academic Research Fellow for the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, Visiting Scholar for the George Washington University, and Faculty-in-Residence for Coopers and Lybrand, Mellon Bank, and FASAB. He has been a member of numerous boards of review for professional publications and has been extensively published. He teaches financial, governmental, and international accounting. His research in progress includes extensive analysis of Federal financial accounting and reporting. Prof. Patton has an AB in Psychology, an MBA in Accounting, and a Ph.D. in Business Administration from Washington University. He is a member of the AICPA, the AGA, and the American Accounting Association. He has been a FASAB member since July 1999.

Robert N. Reid – Mr. Reid joined the Department of the Treasury in June 1999 as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Accounting Operations. He provides policy oversight for governmentwide accounting, including oversight of the preparation of the Government's annual consolidated financial statement. He also is the Department's representative on the FASAB. Before joining the Treasury, he worked for the District of Columbia Government as Controller of the City, and Deputy Director and Chief Financial Officer of the DC Lottery. Prior to that, he was a key member of the financial staff that established Conrail. Mr. Reid began his career auditing commercial accounts for Arthur Andersen and Co. He is a CPA with a BA in Economics from Ursinus College, and is an alumnus of the Kennedy School at Harvard University. Mr. Reid is a former president of the DC Chapter of the Government Finance Officer's Association. He has been a FASAB member since July 1999.

Alan H. Schumacher – Mr. Schumacher was most recently Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of the American National Can Group, a \$2.5 billion NYSE listed manufacturing company where he spent most of his career. He began as a Senior Internal Auditor and held positions of increasing responsibility throughout his career. He developed and executed global financial strategies and directed all financial activities including Treasury, Cash Management, Tax, Accounting, Finance and Control, Internal Audit, Investor Relations and Risk Management functions. In his early career, he worked for three years as a senior auditor with Price Waterhouse LLP. Mr. Schumacher holds a BS in accounting from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and an MBA from Roosevelt University. He is a member of the Illinois Society of Certified Public Accountants, and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Danny Werfel -- Danny Werfel is the Deputy Controller of Office of Federal Financial Management (OFFM) within the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). He is responsible for coordinating OMB's efforts to initiate government-wide improvements in all areas of financial management. Mr. Werfel

plays a leadership role in coordinating OMB review of agency efforts under the Financial Performance, Real Property, and Improper Payments initiatives of the President's Management Agenda. Mr. Werfel is also responsible for coordinating the development of government-wide policy on financial accounting standards, grants management, and financial systems. Prior to his current position, Mr. Werfel served as the Chief of the Financial Integrity and Analysis Branch within OMB, as a budget examiner in OMB's Education Branch, and as a policy analyst in OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. Mr. Werfel also served as a Trial Attorney in the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division. Mr. Werfel is a recipient of both national and local awards from the Association of Government Accountants for his contributions to Federal financial management. Mr. Werfel holds a Masters Degree in Public Policy from Duke University, a Juris Doctor from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a Bachelors Degree in Industrial and Labor Relations from Cornell University. Mr. Werfel joined the Board in May 2006.

The Hierarchy of Accounting Standards

The FASAB develops accounting concepts and standards after considering the results of due process procedures. If the Principals do not object to specific concepts or standards, they are published by FASAB and announced in the Federal Register and become effective.

As previously noted, AICPA has recognized FASAB as the body that promulgates generally accepted accounting principles for federal reporting entities. As a result of that action, the Auditing Standards Board has published Statement on Auditing Standards 91, Amendment to Statement on Auditing Standards No. 69, The Meaning of Present Fairly in Conformity With Generally Accepted Accounting Principles in the Independent Auditor's Report. This will be codified in AICPA's Professional Standards, vol. 1, AU sec. 411). This establishes the GAAP hierarchy for federal entities. (FASAB Concepts Statement 2, Entity and Display, defines federal governmental entities.) The new federal GAAP hierarchy is as follows:

- a. Category (a), officially established accounting principles, consists of Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB) Statements and Interpretations, as well as AICPA and FASB pronouncements specifically made applicable to federal governmental entities by FASAB Statements or Interpretations. FASAB Statements and Interpretations will be periodically incorporated in a publication by the FASAB.

- b. Category (b) consists of FASAB Technical Bulletins and, if specifically made applicable to federal governmental entities by the AICPA and cleared by the FASAB, AICPA Industry Audit and Accounting Guides and AICPA Statements of Position.
- c. Category (c) consists of AICPA AcSEC Practice Bulletins if specifically made applicable to federal governmental entities and cleared by the FASAB, as well as Technical Releases of the Accounting and Auditing Policy Committee of the FASAB.
- d. Category (d) includes implementation guides published by the FASAB staff, as well as practices that are widely recognized and prevalent in the federal government.

In the absence of a pronouncement covered by rule 203 or another source of established accounting principles, the auditor of financial statements of a federal governmental entity may consider other accounting literature, depending on its relevance in the circumstances.

The Accounting and Auditing Policy Committee

The Accounting and Auditing Policy Committee (AAPC) is a standing task force of the FASAB. The AAPC provides guidance, in the form of "Technical Releases," regarding the application of existing principles. The AAPC includes representatives from FASAB's three sponsoring agencies, three representatives from the Chief Financial Officers community (federal financial statement preparers), three representatives from the Inspector General community (federal auditors), a FASAB member, and one member at large.

Technical Releases must be approved by a majority of each of the three voting blocks and reviewed by the Board prior to issuance. Technical Releases are published by FASAB and announced in the Federal Register. AAPC meetings are open to the public. The AAPC maintains an open communication process, including a World Wide Web site at <http://www.fasab.gov>.

Additional Information

Availability of Board Publications. FASAB maintains a mailing list to which exposure drafts, reports, and newsletters are mailed at no charge. Any individual may contact FASAB and request to be added to the mailing list. Individuals who prefer to receive FASAB's newsletter by e-mail may sign up for it at FASAB's World Wide Web site, at the URL shown below. Final Statements of Accounting Concepts and Statements of Standards are not mailed to the general FASAB mailing list, since these Statements are available from the Government Printing Office (202-512-1800). Also, FASAB publications, including final statements, are downloadable from the World Wide Web at <http://www.fasab.gov>

Public Access. The FASAB maintains a public reading room and reference files that are open during office hours, Monday through Friday. The public reading room contains FASAB publications, minutes of meetings, comment letters on publications, and transcripts of public hearings.

Other Information. For further information about the FASAB, including Board meeting schedules, meeting agenda topics, publications, public hearings, comments on Board products, or to subscribe to the FASAB mailing list, call or write the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board, 441 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20548, 202-512-7350, FAX 202-512-7366.

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